

Underwater Music Festival Spotlights Coral Reef Protection (Video)



Divers and snorkelers explored part of the continental United States' only living coral barrier reef Saturday, while rocking to a sub-sea concert staged to encourage reef protection and eco-conscious diving.

The Lower Keys Underwater Music Festival took place at Looe (*pronounced "Lou"*) Key Reef, an area of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary about 6 miles south of Big Pine Key. The sanctuary protects the waters surrounding the entire Keys island chain.

Presented by the Lower Keys Chamber of Commerce and coordinated by US1 Radio 104.1 FM, the concert provided a "submerged soundtrack" for divers discovering the Keys' diverse realm of tropical fish, coral formations and other marine life.

Music broadcast by the radio station was piped underwater through speakers suspended beneath boats above the reef. Participants swayed to a sea-focused playlist that included the Beatles' "Yellow Submarine" and the themes from "The Little Mermaid" and "Pirates of the Caribbean."

The music was interspersed with diver awareness messages about ways to balance enjoying the underwater world and minimizing environmental impacts on the planet's reefs, whose rich biodiversity has led them to be called the rainforests of the sea.

Some divers dressed as mermaids or other sea creatures and pretended to play musical instruments underwater to further entertain festival participants.

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